

City of North Liberty, Iowa Goal Setting Session Summary Report 2014

Mayor

Tom Salm

City Council

Gerry Kuhl, Mayor Pro-tem

Terry Donahue

Coleen Chipman

Brian Wayson

Chris Hoffman

City Administrator

Ryan Heiar, City Administrator



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**CITY OF NORTH LIBERTY, IOWA
GOAL SETTING SESSION
2014**

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CITY OF NORTH LIBERTY, IOWA

SUMMARY REPORT

GOAL SETTING SESSION

2014

Introduction

The City of North Liberty requested the Institute of Public Affairs (IPA) to assist the city with goal setting. IPA agreed to organize and facilitate a process that involved the following steps:

1. Prepare a questionnaire to identify recent accomplishments, issues/trends/concerns, potential new initiatives/programs/policies, and suggestions to improve organizational effectiveness.
2. Conduct a preliminary session with department heads.
3. Conduct a goal-setting session with the elected officials.
4. Preparation of a final report

Goal Setting Work Sessions

City elected officials held a work session conducted by the IPA on January 20, 2014. In attendance and participating at this meeting were Mayor Tom Salm, City Council Members Gerry Kuhl (Mayor Pro-tem), Terry Donahue, Coleen Chipman, Brian Wayson and Chris Hoffman. Also in attendance and participating in this session was City Administrator Ryan Heiar.

A preliminary session was held with department heads on January 14, 2014. In attendance and participating in this session were City Administrator Ryan Heiar, Human Resource Director Deb Hilton, Communications Director Nick Bergus, Building Official Tom Palmer, City Attorney Scott Peterson, Interim Library Director Jennie Garner, Police Chief Diane Venenga, Wastewater Superintendent Dave Ramsey, Parks Director Guy Goldsmith, Recreation Director Shelly Simpson, Street Superintendent Don Colony and Assistant Fire Chief Bill Schmooke.

Major Accomplishments

The following were identified as major accomplishments during the past two years:

Infrastructure

- Jones Blvd Upgrade completion - total loop completed
- 965 Phase 2a completed – improved traffic flow
 - Traffic signal/street light upgrades
- Started planning for new water plant and upgrade to WWTP
 - Fox Engineering Water/Waste Water Studies help prioritize repairs/expansion
- Pheasant Lane Road Completed/partnership with developer
- Annexation east in process – infrastructure and land use planning
 - Started east trunk sewer design
- 1.9 million federal funds committed for Highway 965
- Forevergreen Road Extension/Alignment Study
- Penn St. widening
- Tower 2 repaint
- North Dubuque St. tile install
- 270th St. seal coat
- Half of remote sites (wells, towers, booster station, etc.) have been converted from radio to fiber
- Landscaping – Community Ctr, Hwy 965 intersections, Golf View Dr., St. Andrews Dr., Jones Blvd

City Facilities/Equipment

- Library expansion
- Street Dept Building
 - New wash bay
 - Transferring old shop to Parks
 - Sharing old office with Water
 - Hiring one new employee
- Community Center development as Emergency Center (Red Cross designation)
- Emergency power to Public Safety sector buildings – in process
 - Homeland Security Grant for emergency generator
- Animal Shelter agreement with Linn Co. Humane Society
- Purchasing New Equipment for Department Use; i.e.-Backhoe, Leaf Vac, Snow Blower, Plow Trucks, etc.
- New Handheld Radio System put into Service
- Freedom Pond Outflow Beautification
- City Flood Clean-up and Repairs
- Addition of maintenance/storage building at Water Pollution Control Plant
- Remodel of Community Center entrance
- Ranshaw House updates
- Replaced all valves on water softening units
- Library technology improvements – grant received
- City staff assistance with library project:

- Grading and sodding – Parks
- Parking lot - Streets

City Operations/Governance

- New communications director hired
- Urban Chicken Ordinance
- Comprehensive Plan updated
- Annexation agreement with Coralville
- Agreement with landowners, Coralville regarding Forevergreen Corridor
- Council input to ICCSD discussions
 - ICCSD commitment to build high school in NL
- Council collaboration
- Joint discussion with Planning & Zoning regarding growth and zoning
- High standards of building design and new projects brought to development)
- Front St. annexation (eliminating island)
- Council, City Admin and senior dept. staff doing great job of being proactive in planning and development of future needs
- Council rules
- Franchise agreements (Linn County REC., MidAmerican, Alliant)
- Implemented web-based software for tracking building permits, occupancy permits, zoning permits, code enforcement violations and contractor licenses
- Use electronic devices by inspectors in the field to access the internet to review plans, record inspections, upload photos and communicate with the public
 - Provided a public portal opening to access permit information)
- Ongoing ordinance amendments responding to change – noise, zoning, temporary uses, golf cart, cell tower
- Alliant and MidAmerican grants for tree plantings
- Tree City USA award for 18 years in a row
- Agreement with North Liberty Youth Baseball
- Reviewed Safety Manual and updated training for full-time and seasonal employees
- Communications staff promotions and additions , more positive interaction from dept. with other staff
- New evaluation software created
- New hire orientation program developed
- Team building event in 2012 – successful with positive comments

Major Accomplishments continued

Police/Fire

- New Police Chief Hired
 - Improved leadership in Police Dept
- 2 year Police contract
- Increased training for all officers which led to several officers taking on new roles
 - 1 officer trained to become a Drug Recognition Expert
 - 1 officer joined the drug task force
 - 2 officers became additional firearms instructors
 - 2 officers became O/C instructors
 - 7 officers became ALiCE Instructors
 - 2 officers became additional Field Training Officers
 - 1 officer certified as a Taser Instructor
- Beginning stages of training an officer for the Johnson County Dive Team
- Hosted two statewide training events on rapid deployment and rifle armorer school
- Added two new vehicles for patrol and Drug Task Force officer
- For the last two years, a member of the police department has received the City's Employee of the Year award
- Starting this year, the department will have an Officer of the Year award which will be presented at the end of the year
- Police Chaplain program implemented
- A use of force reporting form was created to identify trends and require supervisor review
- An early warning system was implemented for all officers to identify concerns and trends
- PD received a grant from the Target Corporation for an FLIR (thermal imaging)
- With the help of the community, the department has a new patch
- Participated in the nationwide prescription drug take back program - over 200 pounds of narcotics destroyed
- PD increased its involvement in the community through functions, events, public appearances and donations of both money and time
- FD volunteer pay incentive program
- FD fire apparatus updates
- Fire truck purchase
- Hired part-time FD Recruitment and Retention Coordinator, obtaining funds from SAFER grant
- Fire Department Improving ISO Rating
- The development of a highly trained confined space rescue team and purchase of all required equipment to complement the city wide safety program
- New air handling/exhaust system for Fire Dept.

Major Accomplishments continued

Parks/Rec/Cultural

- Centennial Celebration successful (Hairball!)
 - Parks Dept. site preparation and organization
 - Jerry's fundraising events
- Phase 1 Centennial Park completion
 - Funds set aside
 - Grading and seeding of turf grass
 - 100 trees planted for City Centennial year
- Number of family friendly events organized
- New play infrastructure Comm. Center – indoor playground
- Trail improvements
 - Continuation of trail from Saint Andrews Dr. to Forevergreen Road along Jones Blvd
 - N. Front St
 - Penn Meadows
 - Dubuque St Trail
 - New trail directional signage
- Expansion of City Parks and Rec Area
- Quail Ridge Park improvements
 - Playground
 - Water/sewer
 - New restrooms
 - New ball field
 - Tree planting at dry detention basin
- Penn Meadows Park improvements
 - Playground
 - New concrete trail on east side
 - Tennis court spectator seating addition
 - Tennis court resurfacing
 - Wireless internet added at ball fields
 - New roof on ball field concession stand
- Cornerstone Park – LED trail lighting project completed
- Liberty Centre Park – LED trail lighting project completed
- Community Gardens
 - Added 10 additional plots for renters
 - Completed removal of concrete debris
 - Graded and seeded
- Mar Lee Park – new sidewalk through park, graded and seeded
- Koser Park – new dugout roofs, new 3rd baseline ball field fence
- Park monument signs – Koser Park, Penn Meadows Park, Freedom Park
- North Liberty Hall of Fame program
- April 2013 flash flood
 - Major clean-up of debris around ponds and trails
 - Major playground protective surface repair
 - Trail washout repair at West Lakes Park
 - Restoration and repair of eroded shoreline at West Lakes Park

Major Accomplishments continued

- Operation ReLeaf Residential Tree Program
- Parks Dept. demo work
 - City Hall renovation
 - City-owned house south of Red's Alehouse
 - Grading and seeding of property
- Updated Parks Dept MSDS records/fines and inspection sheets
- Hometown Rewards Program – recycling and conservation – rain barrels and compost bins order/pickup at Parks Dept.
- City tree inventory with IDNR – right of way trees and park trees
 - Use for budget and care of problem trees (e.g. Emerald Ash Borer)
- 4th Annual DNR Free Fish weekend – 400 people
 - Continue work with DNR stocking fish in city-owned ponds
- Annual Muddy Creek Clean-up
- Annual Youth Triathlon

Economic Development and Growth

- Economic Development Plan
- Follow through on east side development
- Housing Units built (multi-family/duplex)
- Housing rehab project
- Continued development of new businesses and residential areas
- Growing commercial development
- Subdivision Ordinance rewritten
- First major building in office park east of I-380

Issues, Concerns, Trends, and Opportunities

The following were identified as issues, concerns, trends, and opportunities that may affect future city services, policies, finances or operations:

Budget/Finance

- New Property Tax law changes - implementation/impact - short and long term
- TIF curtailment by Legislature
- Increased costs to maintain infrastructure (More parks to mow, more staff needed, etc)
- Continued population growth equals continued increase in demand on city services and paying for them.
- Unfunded mandates by Legislature
- Increased cost for public safety
- Increased population and increased RUT is an opportunity for revenue
- Water/sewer rates becoming unaffordable
- Restructuring of Road Use tax formula
- TIF subtle encroachment on operational funds
- Increasing utility costs for city operations
- Health insurance increases

Infrastructure

- More rapid reconstruction of Highway 965 and Penn Street
 - 965 Phase 2 traffic disruption is going to be a huge issue for businesses/travelers
- Push by ICCSD for infrastructure services and additional funding from city
 - Annexation and development of Scanlon Farm driven by ICCSD
 - Planning for new high school
 - More New Schools - Roads, Services, Maintenance
- Continued growth - making sure infrastructure is in place before development is allowed - get ahead of long-term infrastructure improvements
- Cost for development of Water/Sewer in Annexation Area and ROI
- Water Plant and Waste Water Plant new construction/additions
 - Need for expansion due to growth
 - Cost and pass through to property owners/users
- Future IDNR regulations that affect the city's wastewater plant
 - IDNR and the EPA are establishing future regulations without providing guidance on how they expect these new regulations to be met
- Need to encourage Coralville to develop a fixed timeline for 965 from Holiday Road to Forevergreen Rd. (Real bottleneck for NL)
- Storm water management
- Structural condition of ground storage tank
- Gravel Roads (Maintenance, Possible Upgrades)
- Keeping up with street, sidewalk and trail repair as they age
- Emergency power for wells

Issues, Concerns, Trends, and Opportunities, continued

Economic Development

- Opportunity for eastward growth although the pace required for the school being built is an issue
- Lack of use of Council loan incentives for commercial development
- Development to the west of Hwy 965 driven by Centennial Park and UICCU

Public Safety

- Inadequate facilities for police and fire departments.
 - At PD - need more space to include the locker room, evidence, parking lot and a need for a briefing area or meeting space for all staff
- Increase in population- increases public safety concerns and the need for more officer training in order to stay ahead of the curve and demands on department
- An increase in violence against citizens and officers due to mental health and substance abuse issues
- Animal control issues. Examples: Picking up at-large animals, their temporary housing, release and follow up. Another issue is the handling of animal bites, and aggression animals
- Increased lawsuits involving law enforcement
- Continued changes in court decisions and the expectations of law enforcement
- Increases in the amount of time officers spend mediating civil issues.
- Inability to predict crime and need for extra manpower.
- Need for a jail, or structure where offenders can be temporarily housed
- Cost to fully outfit a police vehicle has become as much as the car itself
- Disposal of evidence after the cases have been dissolved.
- Snowmobile trails through city create problems for motorists

City Operations/Governance

- NL continuing to develop good reputation with surrounding communities and partnering more with them as growth demands.
- Increasing need for enforcement activities with growth, especially commercial
- School district agreements and shared use of facilities
- Need for additional staffing in some departments.
- Concern regarding the effect of union pay scale on non-union employees.
- Public perception of City government and employees.
- Increasing role in regional affairs, requiring more time commitment by elected officials

Other

- Need to continue to work on “green” practices, handicapped accessibility, and transportation in and out of the City (Does not need to be fixed route service).
- Explosive population growth and associated needs
- Expansion of farm animal ordinances
- With utility cost increases, opportunity for city to take renewable energy initiatives into consideration.
- Need to identify proposed uses for Ranshaw House
- Plastic bag ordinance

On-Going Commitments

The following were identified as on-going commitments for the upcoming 24 month period:

- Highway 965
 - Construction of Phase II
 - Continue to identify outside funding sources, including federal funding, to implement Master Plan
 - Continue to plan for future phases
 - Continue to provide on-going information/education to public regarding Highway 965 project
- Update Parks Plan; continue to plan and budget for playground equipment and restrooms in parks
- Lobby for federal funds for I-380 interchange projects, Penn St. bridge and Forevergreen Rd
- Ranshaw House improvements – identify funding sources
- Review water and wastewater rates
- Phase I – sanitary sewer upgrade – Cherry St parallel line
- Centennial Park development
- Develop and implement program to improve police image
- Continue to evaluate need for infrastructure improvements in original part of city
- North Front St. reconstruction
- Sewer and water extensions /paving planning/financing - easterly expansion of North Liberty
 - Partner with developers on cost

New Priority Projects, Programs, Policies and Initiatives

The participants reviewed potential projects, programs, policies and initiatives for consideration and selected the following as priorities for the upcoming 24 month period (listed in order of priority):

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1 | Conduct special census |
| 2 (Tie) | Wastewater Plant upgrades per Facility Plan |
| 2 (Tie) | Water Plant upgrades per Facility Plan |
| 4 (Tie) | Rental/housing inspector position |
| 4 (Tie) | Plan for City Hall/Police./Fire Dept. Campus |
| 4 (Tie) | Citizen visioning program |

A complete list of all programs and initiatives considered by the Mayor and City Council members is attached as **Exhibit A.**

Organizational Effectiveness Initiatives

Mayor and Council reviewed and discussed a variety of ideas relating to improving organizational effectiveness to accomplish the selected goals and priorities. After this review and discussion, the following initiatives were to improve organizational effectiveness:

- Promote a sense of community and provide volunteer opportunities in the city.
- Promote programs and activities for senior citizens.
- Continue to hold City Council/Board and Commission work sessions to determine direction on major issues.
- Council to receive agenda packets for Parks, Library and similar boards.
- Better use of TV monitors in council chambers to post the items for public either by major title and to show physical plans/sites by developers, etc. (Do not need to show consent agenda as too long).
- Online police blotter so public is aware of what is going on.
- Continue to expand online request for services for public.
- Personnel policies – review/update/be more uniform where appropriate.

Final Comments

It was a pleasure to again assist the City of North Liberty with this goal setting process. I continue to be extremely impressed with the level of cooperation and positive attitudes of the elected officials and staff.

It is important to note that the prioritization of projects and initiatives is not “cast in stone.” They can be modified as new circumstances may occur.

It is recommended that staff prepare an “action plan” for accomplishing the planning goals. The action plan would define the steps that would be needed to accomplish each goal, identify who is responsible for implementation, and establish a timeline for accomplishment. The action plan should then be presented to the City Council for review and approval. It is also recommended that staff review with the City Council the status of implementing the goals on a quarterly basis.

Jeff Schott
Institute of Public Affairs
University of Iowa
January 22, 2014

Exhibit A

CITY OF NORTH LIBERTY
Goal Setting Session – 2014

SIGNIFICANT NEW INITIATIVES OR PROGRAMS CONSIDERED

- Wastewater plant upgrades per Facility Plan
- Water Plant upgrades per Facility Plan
- Conduct special census
- Look closely at far east side park needs with new land being annexed in to make sure we can get space for the city as the area is being developed (sports complex?)
- Rental/housing inspector position
- Plan for City Hall/PD/Fire Campus
- Revise Mayor/Council salaries to be commensurate with regional communities
- Incentive program for construction of Single Family residences
- Review non-auto transportation/public transit needs in North Liberty
- Encourage development of senior (55+) only housing community (HOA)
- Citizen visioning program
- Consider adding renewable energy sources to city buildings/sites. Solar and wind energy to help offset costs for water dept (i.e. ASR well operation) and WW buildings.
- Meth lab clean-up and the responsibilities of the property owner. Condemning structures until requirements have been satisfied
- Public art program for selecting and placing large, distinctive art in North Liberty
- Updating Community Center décor, signage to match Community Library
- Downtown Revitalization – boost local business
- Develop street and sidewalk repair program
- Aquatic Feasibility Study
- Update Mapping system for utilities (GPS)
- Mobile network for service trucks (iPad's)
- Program/funding for private water and sewer service line repair
- Wage and benefit Compensation Study
- Wellness Program
- Emerald Ash Borer preparedness program – review Tree Ordinance, funding for removals, replantings
- Review recycling options